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ABSTRACT

This manual, which was developed to assist persons using the Helpful Entry Level Skills Checklist, includes typical developmental levels or ages for each skill addressed on the check list for children ages 3 through 6. The guidelines are designed to be used to target appropriate skills for intervention. Skills included in the check list include: understanding of classroom rules, work, communication, social behavior, and self-management. (PB)

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PROJECT STEPS

DEVELOPMENTAL AGES FOR SKILLS INCLUDED ON THE HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS CHECKLIST

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DEVELOPMENTAL AGES FOR SKILLS INCLUDED ON THE HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS CHECKLIST

This manual was developed to assist persons using the Helpful Entry Level Skills Checklist. It includes "typical" developmental levels or ages for each skill addressed on the HELS-R Checklist for children ages 3 through 6. These guidelines can be used to assist direct service providers in targeting appropriate skills for intervention based on the results of the checklist. However, several issues must be addressed prior to using this manual.

This manual provides "typical" behaviors at ages between 3 and 6. There are several things that could influence a child's development in the areas or skills addressed. Prior experience with a skill and/or in a program outside the home can influence the child's behavior and ability to complete the skill at a developmentally appropriate level. Therefore, some skills should be reassessed once the child has had experience in the classroom. In addition, individual variability is to be expected. Skills should be targeted only if they interfere with the child's ability to function successfully in current or future settings.

In addition, the behaviors included in the guidelines are based on the premise that the program is using developmentally appropriate curricula and activities. Many of the skills addressed on the HELS-R Checklist can be influenced by the level of activity the child is directly involved in. If activities are not developmentally appropriate for the child, then inappropriate behaviors are the likely response from the child.

As always when using the Helpful Entry Level Skills Checklist, it should not be used as criteria for placing a child in primary programs, but as a programming tool for preparing the child for the next environment. In addition, the skills included can be developed over a long period of time at the appropriate developmental level for the individual child. For example, when the child is three, physical prompts can and should be used to assist children in following simple directions related to a task (Work Skill #4). At four, we reduce the prompt to a verbal level. By the time the child is six, minimal assistance should be expected.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
Classroom Rules				
#1 Walks rather than runs indoors	Should not be expected to walk without being given clear directions. May need physical or verbal prompt to walk.	Given an instruction to walk, the child should be able to follow direction without physical prompt.	If rule is explicitly stated in class, the child should be expected to follow rule without prompt.	If rule has been made, the child should be expected to walk without prompt.
#2 Waits quietly in line	Should not be expected to wait without being given clear directions. Length of time the child is expected to wait may influence behavior. The child should not be expected to wait more than 3 minutes without some type of involvement in an activity.	Given an instruction to wait, the child should be able to follow direction without physical prompt. The child should not be expected to wait more than five minutes without some type of activity or material to occupy the time.	If rule is explicitly stated in class, the child should be expected to follow rule without prompt. Regardless of the child's age, he/she should not be expected to wait in line more than five minutes without some activity. Expecting a child to wait in line more than five minutes without activity is likely to increase behavior problems.	If rule is explicitly stated in class, the child should be expected to follow rule without prompt. Regardless of the child's age, he/she should not be expected to wait in line more than five minutes without some activity. Expecting a child to wait in line more than five minutes without activity is likely to increase behavior problems.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
#3	**Sits or waits appropriately**	Should not be expected to wait without being given clear directions. Length of time the child is expected to wait may influence behavior. The child should not be expected to wait more than 3 minutes without some type of involvement in an activity.	Given an instruction to wait, the child should be able to follow direction without physical prompt. The child should not be expected to wait more than five minutes without some type of activity or material to occupy the time.	If rule is explicitly stated in class, the child should be expected to follow rule without prompt. Regardless of the child's age, he/she should not be expected to wait in line more than five minutes without some activity. Expecting a child to wait in line more than five minutes without activity is likely to increase behavior problems.	If rule is explicitly stated in class, the child should be expected to follow rule without prompt. Regardless of the child's age, he/she should not be expected to wait in line more than five minutes without some activity. Expecting a child to wait in line more than five minutes without activity is likely to increase behavior problems.
#4	**Complies with simple directions provided to a group**	Can follow simple directions involving one step. May need a physical or verbal prompt directed specifically to the individual (as opposed to a prompt directed toward the group).	Can follow simple directions involving two steps. May need a physical or verbal prompt directed specifically to the individual (as opposed to a prompt directed toward the group).	Can follow simple directions involving three steps. May need a physical or verbal prompt directed specifically to the individual (as opposed to a prompt directed toward the group).	Can follow complex directions involving multiple steps without individual prompts.
#5	**Makes transition from one activity to another with minimal assistance**	The child may need instruction to make transition and physical or verbal prompt to complete transition. This, as with many other skills, will depend on the child's history in programs.	The child should be able to make transition with instruction to do so.	The child should be able to make transition based on instruction to the group.	The child should be able to make transition based on class schedule without specific prompt from adult.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
#6	**Uses appropriate behaviors to get teacher or staff attention**	The child may initiate to adult using a combination of verbal and nonverbal skills (i.e. waving arms).	The child should be able to initiate to teacher or staff using verbal skills but may revert to nonverbal skills if not understood.	The child should be able to initiate to teacher or staff using verbal skills.	The child should be able to make initiations to teacher or staff using complex verbal skills.
#7	**Replaces materials, cleans up own activity area**	The child may need physical and verbal prompt to put away materials.	The child may need verbal prompt to put away materials.	The child may need verbal prompt to put away materials.	The child should be able to put away materials when finished without verbal instructions from adult.
#8	**Stays in own space for activities**	The child should not be expected to stay in own space without instruction to do so. With an instruction and physical prompt, the child should be expected to stay in their own space. The child's ability to stay in own space will be dependent on the interest level of the activity and the length of the activity.	With an instruction to do so, the child should be able to stay in own space. As with young children, the child's ability to remain in own space will be dependent on the interest level and length of the activity.	With an instruction to do so, the child should be able to stay in own space. At this age, children can be expected to remain in own space when the interest level of the activity is not optimal.	The beginning of a routine activity (one in which a common set of expectations have been explained and practiced) should be an adequate prompt for children to stay in their own space.
#9	**Stays with group outside classroom**	The child may need a verbal and physical prompt to remain with the group.	The child may need a verbal and physical prompt to remain with the group.	The child should be expected to stay with the group following a verbal prompt.	The child should be expected to stay with a group as long as the rule has been previously established in the classroom.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
Work Skills					
#1	**Refrains from disturbing the activities of others.**	The child should not be expected to refrain from disturbing the activities of others without instruction to do so. With an instruction and physical prompt to refrain from disturbing others, the child should be expected to do so. The child should be given something to do in place of disturbing others. However, it should be noted that at this age children should be encouraged to interact with others.	With a verbal instruction to do so, the child should be expected to refrain from disturbing the activities of others. Social interaction should be encouraged when appropriate.	With a verbal instruction, the child should be expected to refrain from disturbing the activities of others. It would be helpful to establish a classroom rule.	The existence of a classroom rule should be an adequate prompt for children to refrain from disturbing other children.
#2	**Stops activity when given direction "stop"**	The child should be able to follow simple one step direction such as "stop" although a physical prompt may be necessary.	The child should be able to follow direction "stop" without a physical prompt.	The child should be able to follow the direction "stop".	The child should be able to follow the direction "stop".

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
#3	**Works independently on developmentally appropriate materials**	Developmentally appropriate tasks for a three year old include activities that allow the child to be actively involved. At this age, children should not be expected to work on ditto sheets or other "in seat work". Children will need adult attention in the form of comments and reinforcement.	Developmentally appropriate tasks for a four year old are consistent with those of a three year old. Children at this age may be able to work with less teacher attention than the younger child.	Developmentally appropriate activities for a five year old again should involve children. Ditto sheets should be discouraged and replaced with concrete materials. Although children can work in the absence of teacher attention, some attention is important to the development of self-esteem.	If children are in developmentally appropriate environments at this age, they should be expected to complete activities in the absence of teacher attention or prompting. However, as with younger children, six year old children need to be challenged and that will require intervention from the teacher.
#4	**Follows simple directions related to tasks**	The child may need a verbal or physical prompt to follow a simple direction involving one step. The child will most likely need a verbal and physical prompt to follow more complex directions.	The child may need a verbal prompt to follow directions that are more than one step.	The child should be able to follow a two step direction with minimal assistance. However, more complex directions will require verbal and/or physical prompts.	The child should be able to follow complex directions with minimal assistance.
#5	**Engages in developmentally appropriate activities for 1-3-5-10-15 minutes**	If activities are truly developmentally appropriate, the child should be able to participate in activities for 15 minutes. A description of developmentally appropriate activities is included in Work Skills #3.	If activities are truly developmentally appropriate, the child should be able to participate in activities for 15 minutes. A description of developmentally appropriate activities is included in Work Skills #3.	If activities are truly developmentally appropriate, the child should be able to participate in activities for 15 minutes. A description of developmentally appropriate activities is included in Work Skills #3.	If activities are truly developmentally appropriate, the child should be able to participate in activities for 15 minutes. A description of developmentally appropriate activities is included in Work Skills #3.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
#6	**Waits until directions are completed to begin activities.**	As with other simple commands, the child may need a physical and/or verbal prompt.	The child should be able to wait until directions are completed with only a verbal prompt.	The child should be able to wait until directions are completed without a prompt.	The child should be able to wait until directions are competed without a prompt.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
Communication					
#1	**Comes to adult when signaled**	The child may need a verbal and physical prompt.	The child should come when signaled without an additional prompt.	The child should come when signaled without an additional prompt.	The child should come when signaled without an additional prompt.
#2	**Communicates own needs and preferences**	The child may be able to communicate need or preference through a combination of verbal and nonverbal means when asked to do so. The child may not initiate communication about needs and preferences.	The child may be able to indicate needs and preferences verbally in response to adult prompts. The child may initiate communication about needs and preferences through nonverbal and verbal means.	The child may be able to communicate needs and preferences verbally in response to adult prompts. The child may initiate needs and preferences verbally and nonverbally.	The child should be able to initiate or respond to adult prompts regarding needs and preferences using verbal and nonverbal means of communicating.
#3	**Answers questions about self, family, name, address, age, birthdate, parent's names**	The child should know name and age.	The child should know name, age, parents' and siblings' names.	The child should know name, age, parents' and siblings' names.	The child should know all the listed information.
#4	**Attends to peer or adult who is talking to group**	The child should be able to attend to peer or adult for short periods of time (5 minutes) in the absence of distracting events in the classroom.	The child should be able to attend to peer or adult for short periods of time (5 to 10 minutes)with minimal distractions in the classroom.	The child should be able to attend to peer or adult for up to 15 minutes with minimal distractions in the classroom.	The child should be able to attend to adult or peer even in the presence of distractions.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
Social Behavior Skills					
#1	**Responds positively to social recognition and reinforcement**	At age three, children's ability to respond positively to recognition and reinforcement will depend on their history of interactions with significant others. Many children at this age may be uncomfortable in this situation.	At age four, children's ability to respond positively to recognition and reinforcement will still depend on their history of interactions with significant others.	By age five most children will have had experiences outside the home environment that may contribute to their ability to respond positively to social recognition. There will be some children who will have to learn this skill even at this age.	Most children should be able to respond positively to social recognition and reinforcement. Teachers should be sensitive to children this age who still are unable to do this.
#2	**Modifies behavior when provided with verbal direction**	The child may need a physical prompt at this age.	The child may need a physical prompt unless some type of history has been established.	The child should be able to modify behavior when provided with clear verbal directions.	The child should be able to modify behavior when provided with clear verbal directions.
#3	**Follow school rules**	At age 3, children should not be expected to follow school rules without prompts. Most children at this age will have had no experience with school rules. Discussion of rules with role playing and feedback could help facilitate these behaviors.	At age 4, children should not be expected to follow school rules without prompts. Most children at this age will have had no experience with school rules. Discussion of rules with role playing and feedback could help facilitate these behaviors.	Some prompting and feedback may be necessary for children to follow school rules. This is especially true at the beginning of the school year before the child has experience with the rules.	Following a discussion of school rules, children should be expected to follow the rules. A discussion, consequences, and examples should be initially provided.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
#4	**Separates from parents and accepts school personnel**	The child's ability to separate from parents may be dependent on the child's history of separation from parents. Children who have never been left outside the home may have a difficult time regardless of their age. Young children may not understand that the parents will return, particularly at the beginning of the school year.	The child's ability to separate from parents may be dependent on the child's history of separation from parents. Children who have never been left outside the home may have a difficult time regardless of their age. However, after the first few weeks of school, children should be expected to separate from parent and accept school personnel.	After the first few days of school, this should not be a problem for five year old children.	After the first few days of school, this should not be a problem for six year old children.
#5	**Interacts cooperatively with others**	Children are only beginning to play cooperatively at age 3.	Children should be able to play simple games that involve cooperation. Competition may still be difficult for children at this age.	Cooperative play involving minimal levels of competition should not be problematic for children at this age.	Cooperative play involving competition is the preferred type of play for many children at this age.
#6	**Respects others and their property**	Children will have to be taught what belongs to them and what belongs to others. They may also need to be prompted on a regular basis about respecting others' property.	Children will have to be taught about respecting others' property. Frequent reminders may be necessary.	Respecting other's property should be discussed with children at the beginning of the school year. Occasional reminders may be necessary.	Class rules related to respecting others and their property may be adequate. However, a reminder of the class rules may be necessary.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
#7	**Expresses emotions and feelings appropriately**	Children will express many different types of emotions but the emotions may not always be appropriate to the context (i.e. may act mad when really sad).	Children will express many different types of emotions but the emotions may not always be appropriate to the context.	Children should be able to express some emotions appropriately.	Children should be able to express most emotions appropriately but may have some trouble with anger and jealousy.
#8	**Exhibits self-control regarding aggressive behavior to others (i.e. hitting, biting, using obscene language)**	Many children will not exhibit self control at this point in the absence of a management system. These behaviors may be a child's primary mode of communication at this age.	Children will be more likely to understand the consequences of their behavior at this age. A management system may be necessary for children with high rates of these behaviors.	Class rules in combination with a management system should control these behaviors in most children.	Class rules that are enforced should be adequate for controlling children's aggressive behaviors at this age.
#9	**Waits to take turns and shares**	Sharing will be difficult for many children at this age. Teacher instruction, feedback, and reinforcement may be necessary for children to share.	Although children are more likely to share by age four, it will still be a problem for the children who have never been in a program. Teacher instruction, feedback, and reinforcement may be necessary for children to share.	Most children by age five understand sharing and will share their toys and materials. However, some children may be in a program for the first time. As with younger children this will impact their ability to share. Class rules and discussion may be necessary.	If sharing has been discussed and emphasized in the classroom, most children will be able to share.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
#10	Uses imitative behavior appropriately	Children are still learning to imitate the behaviors of other children at this point. In many cases, they may imitate behavior without consideration of whether the behavior is appropriate or inappropriate. It may also be the case that children will imitate behaviors for which other children are being reinforced.	Children will be able to discriminate verbally between many appropriate and inappropriate behaviors. However, they may still imitate behaviors that are observed as being reinforced.	Children are more able to discriminate verbally and in their behavior between what is appropriate and inappropriate. It still may be the case that they will imitate inappropriate behaviors that are reinforced by teachers and other adults.	Children are more able to discriminate verbally and in their behavior between what is appropriate and inappropriate. It still may be the case that they will imitate inappropriate behaviors that are reinforced by teachers and other adults.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
Self Management Skills					
#1	**Eats lunch or snack with minimal assistance**	The child should be able to eat a meal or snack with minimal assistance given typical foods. The child may need assistance with skills such as cutting meat and opening milk cartons.	The child should be able to eat a meal or snack with minimal assistance.	The child should be able to eat most any meal without assistance (the exception would be food that needs to be cut using a sharp knife).	The child should be able to eat most any meal without assistance (the exception would be food that needs to be cut using a sharp knife).
#2	**Is aware of or attends to appearance (i.e. keeps nose clean, adjusts clothing)**	The child will need physical assistance with dressing and with such skills as blowing nose. The child may not even realize there is a problem with their appearance.	The child should only need minimal assistance with these skills but may still need prompting to know that there is a problem with their appearance.	The child will need only minimal assistance with the skill or knowing that there is a need.	The child should be able to maintain appearance independently.
#3	**Locates and uses restroom**	The child should not be expected to locate restroom independently at age three unless the bathroom is in the classroom.	The child should not be expected to locate restroom independently at age four unless the bathroom is in the classroom.	The child should be able to locate and use restroom with only minimal assistance.	The child should be expected to locate and use restroom independently.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
#4	**Cares for bathroom needs**	The child will need a high level of assistance at age three. Children may still be in the process of being toilet trained. They may also need assistance getting pants on and off. Children may not know the routine of going to the bathroom and washing hands.	The child will still need assistance with some bathroom needs (i.e. putting clothes on and off, wiping). Children will need assistance with the routine.	The child should be able to care for their bathroom needs with only minimal assistance.	The child should be able to care for their bathroom needs independently.
#5	**Puts on/takes off outer clothing with minimal assistance**	The child may need physical and verbal assistance with putting on and taking off outerwear.	Most children will only need assistance with fasteners.	Children may still need minimal assistance with fasteners.	Children should be able to put on and take off outerwear with little or no assistance.
#6	**Makes transition between classroom and transportation with minimal assistance.**	The child should not be expected to make this transition alone especially at the beginning of the school year.	The child should not be expected to make this transition alone at the beginning of the school year. Once the routine is established, the child should be able to make the transition with minimal assistance. Minimal assistance would include assistance crossing traffic (if this is an issue) or opening heavy doors.	Once the routine is established, the child should be able to make the transition with minimal assistance. Minimal assistance would refer primarily to assistance crossing traffic (if this is an issue).	The child should be able to make this transition after being shown the route and reminded about safety issues.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
#7	**Seeks out adult if hurt or cannot handle social situations**	Before expecting children to make an appropriate decision in social situations, roleplaying, modeling and demonstration should be provided. Children should be actively involved in this process. Additionally, situations might have to be discussed as they arise.	Before expecting children to make an appropriate decision in social situations, roleplaying, modeling and demonstration should be provided. Children should be actively involved in this process. Additionally, situations might have to be discussed as they arise.	Children will be more likely by this age to have had some social experience that will assist them in understanding different social situations. Role-playing and discussion of possible strategies for dealing with social situations should be conducted. Ongoing discussions of situations as they occur should be maintained.	Roleplaying and discussion of possible strategies for dealing with social situations should be conducted. Ongoing discussions of situations as they occur should be maintained. However, children at this state are becoming much more competent at analyzing situations and responding in an appropriate manner.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
#8	**Is aware of obvious dangers and avoids them**	Children may understand some dangers such as hot water, but may not avoid them. However, it should not be assumed that children at this age will avoid any danger. Attention should be given to repeatedly reminding children of dangerous situations and the consequences of not following rules related to those situations. As with children of all ages, the best way to prevent dangerous situations from occurring is to design the environment to reduce the likelihood of them occurring.	Although children may understand more about dangerous situations, children at this age are curious and still likely to explore potentially dangerous situations. Attention should be given to repeatedly reminding children of dangerous situations and the consequences of not following rules related to those situations.	Discussions of potentially dangerous situations should be reviewed with children. Children should be able to identify common dangerous situations and avoid them by this age. Yet, the best rule related to dangerous situations is never to assume that children will avoid them.	Discussions of potentially dangerous situations should be reviewed by children. Children should be able to identify common dangerous situations and avoid them by this age. Yet, the best rule related to dangerous situations is never to assume that children will avoid them.

HELPFUL ENTRY LEVEL SKILLS
DEVELOPMENTAL AGES

	SKILL	3 YEARS OF AGE	4 YEARS OF AGE	5 YEARS OF AGE	6 YEARS OF AGE
#9	**Locates own possessions and returns them to appropriate place**	Locating one's own possessions is difficult at this age particularly when children have possessions that are quite similar. Possessions should be marked with some notation that the child understands to indicate that it belongs to that child. In terms of putting them in the appropriate place, children will need initially to be shown the appropriate place for specific items. The location should be accessible to the child or minimal assistance will be required.	Possessions should be clearly marked with the child's name and efforts should be made to ensure that children can read their own names. A routine related to the appropriate place for possessions should be reviewed prior to expecting the child to place them appropriately.	Children by this age are much more likely to be able to identify their own possessions even when there are similar items in the classroom. Items should still be marked with the child's name to prevent confusion. The appropriate location for items should be reviewed with children. Children should be able to find their own possessions with little or no assistance relatively quickly.	As long as items are marked with the child's name and a location for possessions has been specified, this should not be a problem for children this age.